

1    ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

2            A distributed network includes a plurality of hosts  
3    and a shared communication channel. Each host has a  
4    storage device. Each host may act as a client and a  
5    server. A file is divided into a plurality of segments.  
6    Each segment is transmitted to the storage devices of  
7    several of said hosts and stored in said storage device of  
8    said host. Each host is coupled to the shared  
9    communication channel. A host acting as a client requests  
10   that the hosts act as servers and collectively send all of  
11   the segments to the requesting client so that the  
12   requesting client can gather the segments together in order  
13   for the segments to self-assemble and generate a single  
14   copy of the file. At least one host has a global list with  
15   entries. Each entry contains all the necessary information  
16   about the file.